

GENERAL NOTES.

ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW.—We have long suspected that this Swallow nested on the shale cliffs on the Vermillion River, in this county, but were able to verify our suspicions only this summer. On the 24th of June, I saw one of these birds visit a cranny in the well shaded west wall, at a point nine feet above the river. By the aid of a short log, I reached up and explored the black, narrow passage, formed by the partial springing of a superficial shale layer. Several half fledged young rested on a considerable heap of straw at a distance of about two feet and a half. The female charged boldly at me twice, but for the most part did not venture within fifty feet of me.

ENGLISH SPARROW NESTING IN SHALE CLIFFS.—It is usually gratifying to find a bird nesting in a state of absolute nature. For instance, altho we are often pleased to have the birds accept our hospitality, it is more interesting to find a Chimney Swift nesting in a hollow tree than in the present conventional situation. But I confess to feelings of mingled disgust and despair when I found, on July 4th last, that the English Sparrows were nesting freely on the high shale cliffs of the Vermillion River near Mill Hollow. Is no place safe from the desecration of these impudent intruders? Every available cranny of the cliffs at this point was occupied by them, and the clatter of passerine Billingsgate filled the air. The place is several hundred yards from any buildings and is as secluded as any native bird could desire. Doubtless these ruffians are dispossessing the Rough-winged Swallows, who were finding all too few favorable nesting sites as it was.

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Is it generally observed that the female Goldfinch is an outrageous thief? On the 7th day of May last year, as I sat at the window watching a Chipping Sparrow building her nest in a small red cedar, I observed that every time the Sparrow went off in search of more material the Goldfinch quietly slipped into the bush and proceeded to pull the nest apart, flying off with portions of it in her bill. What could she want of it so long before her own nesting season? Later on, last summer we watched a female Goldfinch pull a Hummingbird's nest to pieces, taking out the downy lining almost faster than the Hummingbird could put it in.

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